

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 046630

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, AR

SUBJECT: EGAN KIDNAPPING - PRESS GUIDANCE

'HERE FOLLOWS PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR USE OF DEPART-
MENT OFFICIALS MARCH 1:

QUOTE...

Q. HOW DO WE VIEW GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA'S POSITION
OF REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE WITH EGAN'S KIDNAPPERS?

SR. THE DEMANDS OF THE TERRORISTS MADE MEANINGFUL
NEGOTIATIONS VERY DIFFICULT.

Q. COULD THE GOA HAVE PRODUCED ONR OR MORE OF THE
PRISONERS?

SR. THIS IS A QUESTION WHICH SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE
GOA.

Q. DID THE UNITED STATES PRESS THE GOVERNMENT OF
ARGENTINA TO NEGOTIATE FOR EGAN'S RELEASE?

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SR. BECAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MR. EGAN'S SAFE RELEASE WE MAINTAINED THE CLOSEST OF CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA AND EXCHANGED VIEWS ON HOW BEST TO SECURE HIS RELEASE.

Q. DID THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT IT WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE PRECIPITATE HIS DEATH?

SR. THE TERRORISTS BY THEIR ACTIONS AND THE NATURE OF THEIR DEMANDS MUST BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MR. EGAN'S MURDER.

Q. HAVE WE HEARD FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA REGARDING THE EGAN MURDER?

SR. THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAVE OFFICIALLY EXPRESSED THEIR PROFOUND REGRETS.

Q. I UNDERSTAND WE CLOSED OUR OFFICES IN PROVINCIAL ARGENTINE CITIES AFTER THE KIDNAPPING OF ALFRED LAUN IN CORDOBA LAST APRIL. WHAT WAS EGAN DOING STILL IN CORDOBA?

SR. WE WITHDREW ALL AMERICAN EMPLOYEES WHO HAD BEEN SENT TO POSTS IN PROVINCIAL CITIES IN ARGENTINA. MR. EGAN, HOWEVER, WAS A PERMANENT RESIDENT OF CORDOBA, WHERE HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN EMPLOYED BY A PRIVATE U.S. FIRM, CHOSE TO REMAIN THERE AND TO CONTINUE AS A UNITED STATES CONSULAR AGENT.

Q. IS THERE ANY DANGER TO OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA?

SR. SEVERAL TERRORIST GROUPS IN ARGENTINA HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CARRY OUT KIDNAPPINGS AND ASSASSINATIONS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO PROTECT THOSE U.S. OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA.

Q. ARE YOU INSTITUTING SPECIAL OR ADDITIONAL MEASURES UNCLASSIFIED

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TO DEFEND U.S. OFFICIALS?

SR. WE DO NOT DISCUSS PROTECTIVE MEASURES.

Q. WHAT STEPS DID THE GOA TAKE TO ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT EGAN'S SAFE RELEASE?

SR. WE UNDERSTAND THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTED

ONE OF THE MOST EXTENSIVE DRAGNET OPERATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY, UTILIZING POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES AVAILABLE IN SEARCH FOR MR. EGAN. THE CITY WAS CORDONED OFF AND THOROUGH CHECKS MADE OF VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS. UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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